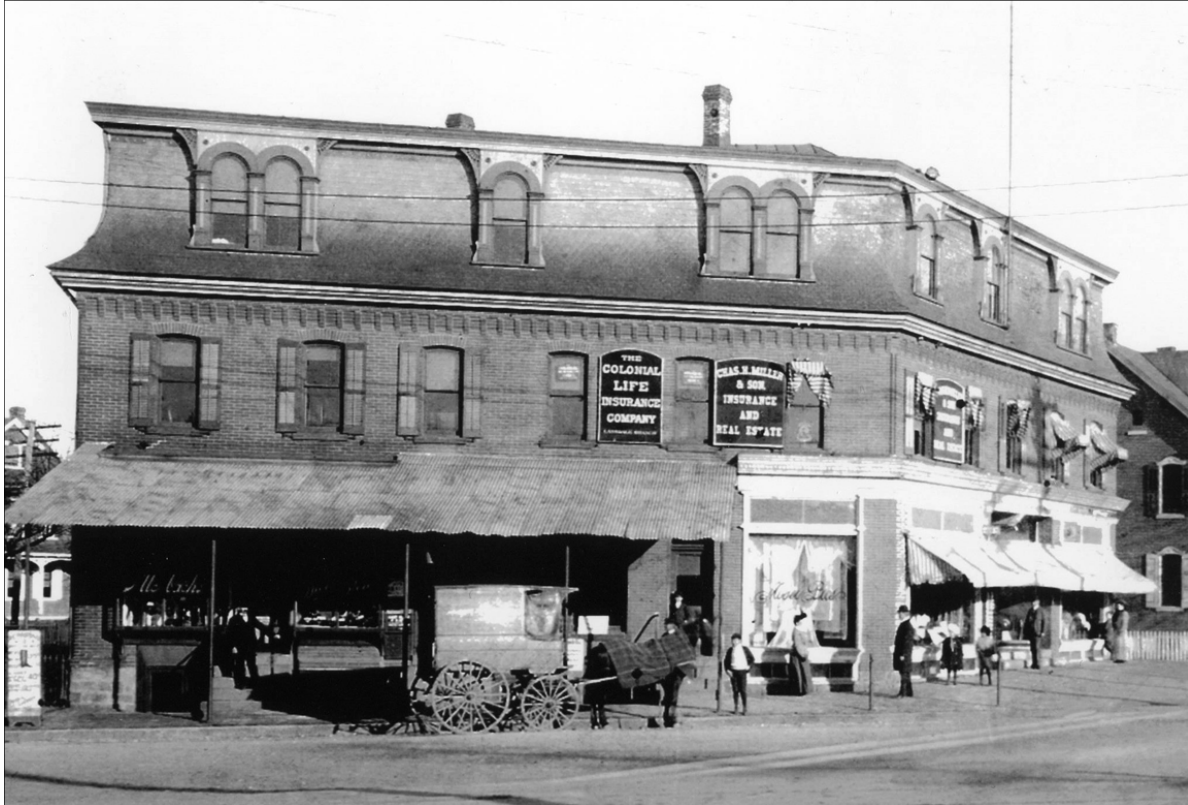


SAVING HISTORIC LANSDALE

MOYER BUILDING HOME TO MANY



LATE 1800s VIEW OF THE ORIGINAL MOYER BUILDING

By DICK SHEARER

If you want a glimpse of what life was like in downtown Lansdale in the late 19th century, look no farther than the Moyer Building.

What is the Moyer Building, you ask? Glimpse at the photo accompanying this story and you'll recognize it immediately. Today a big portion of it is home to the Chantilly Floral Boutique. About 125 years have passed since a Matthew Brady-era camera captured that old-time image of W. Main and Walnut Sts. The same can be said for many businesses – more than 100 have come and gone in the intervening years.

Despite a dozen decades and many retrofits to satisfy all those tenants, the Moyer Building still looks great, perhaps better than ever. That is why it's near the top of our list of historic downtown commercial structures that deserve long-time preservation.

It was built by Tobias D. Koffel who first came to

Lansdale in the late 1870s to erect a general store at Main and Broad Sts. where McQuillan's Photography Studio is now located.

Koffel ran the store for a few years but sold it to J.M. Slifer and moved out of town for a period. He returned in 1885 and purchased the valuable strip of land on Walnut Street from Main to Second. On it he erected his new store, which was strategically located within a snowball's toss of the railroad tracks. In short order it attracted many additional businesspeople who became his tenants.

In August, 1890, Koffel enlisted Lansdale architect Milton Bean to draw up plans for an addition on Walnut Street that would include a post office. Like the original building, it was rented out quickly.

But Koffel's time in the store was limited to about seven years. He sold the business - but not the building - to Brand and Kratz in 1892. The reason was illness; he contracted acute tuberculosis in 1892

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and died in 1894

Koffel's passing led to a public auction of his buildings in September, 1895, but it failed miserably despite the advantage of their track-side location. Bidding on the entire tract started at \$9,500 but there were no takers.

Two years later, the buildings still remained unsold so the heirs of his estate agreed to allow Koffel's widow to retain ownership for \$11,000.

The name "Moyer" was finally attached to the structure in April, 1904, when the Moyer Brothers purchased it from the widow. Like Koffel, they started out operating a general store in the Slifer building in 1899 before moving to Main and Walnut.

The Moyers made extensive improvements to the building which included refitting the ground level stores as well as the offices, meeting rooms and apartments on the second and third floors. Among the changes was the addition of a meeting room (capacity 75) for use by lodges.

Over the next four years, the Moyers completed renovations that expanded the Walnut Street portion of the building to three full stories by building atop what was there before. Among the improvements was a "commodious toilet for the use of office tenants". The exterior on the Walnut Street side was reworked to give the building the appearance it has today.

Because of its size and adaptability, the Moyer Building as it was called after 1904, attracted a wide range of businesses over the decades, far too many to list here and some which may have been long forgotten.

They were as diverse as an umbrella factory, a Ford dealership, furniture stores, shoe stores, at least four grocery stores, a drug store or two, a cigar factory and store, a camera shop, a hosiery mill, a millinery parlor, a Chinese laundry and countless clothing shops.

It is safe to say that if one downtown structure is a testament to Lansdale's once-vibrant commercial district, it is the Moyer Building, still going strong after all these years.



VIEW OF WALNUT STREET SIDE OF MOYER BUILDING CIRCA 1915

The historic Moyer Building

Seen below are just some of the many businesses that occupied portions of the Moyer Building since 1892.

The list is divided into the Main Street section and the Walnut Street section. The latter was built as an addition in the 1890s.

The dates noted are only approximations that were compiled from business directories, telephone books and newspaper advertisements.

It is generally accepted that the Moyer Building housed at least twice as many businesses as any other commercial structure in town.



INTERIOR OF AMERICAN STORES MARKET IN MOYER BUILDING, CIRCA 1935

MAIN STREET SIDE

AARON KRATZ & WILLIE G. BRAND GROCERY 1892
T.D. KOFFEL STORE AND POST OFFICE 1892
BRAND AND KRATZ, THE CENTRAL STORE 1892
THE KRATZ STORE 1899-1922
HORACE E. JENKINS CIGAR MANUFACTURING 2ND FLOOR 1899
A.E. JENKINS BYCYCLE STORE 1901-1905
CHARLES MILLER REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE 1905-1913
J.C. SWARTLEY REAL ESTATE 1905-1912
T. ALLEN BILLGER TOBACCO AND CIGARS 1905
O.K GEISINGER INSURANCE AND REAL ESTATE 1906
T.A. REED, TIN AND SHEET IRON, BASEMENT 1906-1912
MOYER BROTHERS MEN'S AND YOUTH CLOTHING 1906-1912
J.B. STEVENSON'S GENERAL UPHOLSTERY STORE 1906-1912
J.F. WHITMAN ELECTRICAL 1908-1948
ALLEBACH SHOES 1912
S.S. SANDERLIN EYESIGHT DOCTOR 1912
H. SOMMER CIGARS 1920
HUNSBERGER-MOYER CO. UMBRELLAS 1912-1925
THE MODEL HEATING AND IMPROVEMENT CO. 1912
FRANK QUADE, SHOEMAKER 1912
GEORGE H. BUCHERT, SHEET METAL 1918-1921
FRANK J. BARNDT & CO., WHOLESALE GRAIN 1920
DINUNZIO SHOE STORE 1922-1931
YE YOUNG APOTHECARY, RICHARD BITNER 1925-1932
AMERICAN STORES 1920-1940
VERA'S SHOP, SHOE REPAIRS , BASEMENT 1930-1931
LA RAINE BEAUTY SHOP 1936
LANSDALE CLEANERS STORE 1940
ACME MARKET 1948
S. NEIBURG, WOMEN'S CLOTHING 1950-1972
DAVID AND DAVID FURNITURE 1977
BRIDAL WORLD 1982
CHANTILLY FLORAL 1994-PRESENT
LANSDALE BUSINESS ASSOCIATES 2007
ZOOM SEWER AND DRAIN CLEANING SERVICES 2007
FOND LAUNDRY 1906
AMERICAN OPINION BOOK STORE 1967

WALNUT STREET SIDE

THE MIRROR 1938
LANSDALE KIDDEE SHOP 1940
THE STYLISH STOUT SHOP 1942-1948
F & J HAT SHOP 1958
STURM'S MILLINERY 1964
JANET'S HAT AND ACCESSORY SHOP 1967
SHIRT TALES 1969-1972
LET'S GO FISHING 1994

PROFESSOR H.K. BECHTEL, MUSIC TEACHER 1893
HORACE E. JENKINS, REAL ESTATE AND INSURANCE 1893
A.D. JOHNSON, CONVEYANCER, INSURANCE 1893
CHARLES H. MILLER REAL ESTATE 1893-1936
H. PIERCE LAKIN ,PHYSICIAN 1912
L.K. ALLEBACH SHOES 1920-1922
W.F. WHITMAN AND BROTHER ELECTRCIANS 1925-1942
VIERA'S SHOE REPAIR 1930-1945
JOHN'S SHOE REPAIR 1945
THOMAS M. COONEY, INC. ACCOUNTING 1981
ROBERT LENGYEL SPORTS CARDS 1994
CHOCOLATE CABOOSE CANDY 2007
ALVIN E. JENKINS PLUMBING AND GAS FITTER 1893-1899
L.M. AND H.C. MOLL ART STUDIOS 1893
CHARLES LONG LAUNDRY, BASEMENT 1906
JOHN KAVASH TAILOR 1906-1925
THE MODEL HEATING AND IMPROVEMENT CO. 1912
THE DAIRY BUTTERINE CO., GROCERIES 1912
FRANK C. HECKLER, GROCERIES AND COFFEE 1918-1929
CHARLES H. MILLER STUDEBAKER 1920
GEORGE H. BUCHERT CO., SHEET METAL WORK 1920
EDWARD R. BECK, EVERYTHING ELECTRICAL 1920-1925
U.S. POST OFFICE 1920
LISBON TAILORS 1981
REARDON CERAMICS 1994
ALL-AMERICAN OFFICE DEPOT 1994
LANE SPORTS CARDS 2002
X-COMMUNICATIONS 2002-2007
MILLER AND RICHARDSON REAL ESTATE 1912
HOWARD F. BOORSE, JUSTICE OF PEACE 1920
JOHN HECK TAILOR AND FURRIER 1930
SCHMIDT TIRE CO. 1940-1943
THE CAMERA SHOP (FAMILY CAMERA) 196?-1981
JAMES E., PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY 1977
HAUNTED HOUSE CREATIONS, COLLECTIBLES 1994
SCHOLETTE'S CELLAR GIFTS 1994
WALNUT STREET GROCERY 1912
CHARLES SAX , ELECTRIC SUPPLIES AND BICYCLES 1912
"BUNS" RESTAURANT 1916
SPRINGER'S GROCERY STORE 1920
KEIGER'S RESTAURANT 1922-1925
RAPPAPORT RESTAURANT 1925
HOME SERVICE RESTAURANT 1925
MARTIN'S TAILORING AND CLEANING 1940-1948
CHARLANNE FABRIC SHOP 1948-1956
KEY RECORDS AND TAPES 1977
BUCKS COUNTY TELEVISION SERVICE CO. 1981
TAYLOR ELECTRONICS 1994
OLD TOWNE CLOCKS 2002